

A Better World: Infusing Social Justice Pedagogy in World Language Classrooms

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The Problem

Educators and educational systems are entering into a pivotal era of education which society was catapulted into by unfortunate current events, such as the killing of George Floyd and the Pulse Nightclub shooting.

In response to these tragic events and the roll out of new educational standards school districts and educators are investigating how social justice pedagogy can be integrated into the curriculum. The goal is to create a system that is more equitable for all, while promoting change towards a world that is more accepting, inclusive and just.

With the creation of the new 2019 World Language Content Standards for California Public Schools, world language educators are faced with the task of integrating these new standards into their current curriculum with a focus on social justice pedagogy.

Results

Based on preliminary analysis of the data the following themes are emerging:

- Teachers are incorporating components of social justice pedagogy into their level 1 and 2 language courses while maintaining some target language acquisition.
- Reflection and in-depth discussion are done in English.
- Tools to teach these lessons are teacher created, and authentic materials are sought out by the teacher
- Concerns such as student maturity and teacher knowledgeability are emerging.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into how secondary world language teachers are integrating social justice pedagogy into their level one and two curriculum. Current literature shows that social justice pedagogy can seamlessly be integrated into higher level courses using the target language of study. However, little research has been conducted to investigate if level one and two world language courses can be used as a vehicle to teach social justice while maintaining target language acquisition.



“ I think all of it is just gaining perspective. Education is about opening your mind to new things, and as a teacher, I have to be willing to do that knowing that sometimes I might not be right, I might not have all the answers ...”

Quote, 2021 – Participant 1

Methodology

This research used a qualitative approach in the form of a case study in order to gain detailed information regarding the infusion of social justice pedagogy into secondary world language classes.

Due to the specificity of this study, participants were selected using a purposive sampling method. Participants had to meet three criteria: (1) be a world language teacher, (2) work in a secondary setting, and (3) teach a level 1 or 2 course.

Data were collected directly from the participants during a semi-structured private interview. The interviews were conducted via zoom and recorded for transcription purposes only.

The data collected were analyzed with an inductive analysis method using a coding scheme approach.

Implications

Results from this study will provide world language educators with preliminary knowledge on how some teachers are integrating social justice pedagogy into their level 1 and 2 courses while maintaining target language. The research also revealed obstacles educators are encountering with implementing social justice pedagogy.

Tools	Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Culture➤ Current Events➤ Authentic Resources➤ Projects➤ Multiple Perspectives➤ Discussions/reflections➤ Imagery/art	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Lack of up-to-date information in textbooks➤ Time required to locate authentic resources➤ Sensitiveness of the material